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Edited by AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

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# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

SHA'BAN 1351 A.H.

VOL. XX.

DECEMBER, 1932 A.C.

No. 12.

## WHAT DOES MUHAMMAD SAY ABOUT JESUS?

BY ERNEST ERLE POWER.

The Dutch and Malay versions of this article are in the press and are being financed by the author. An American and Hindustani version are next on the programme, after which a German, a French, an Italian and a Spanish version will be printed. It is the purpose of the author to spread this pamphlet over the wide world wherever Christian missionaries are carrying on pro-Christian, and, in many cases, anti-Muslim propaganda as is the case in the Dutch East Indies where the author is now residing.

As to himself the author writes to us the following : " I can only say that I have come to insight through a careful study of the various religions of the world. I am an American by nationality but have travelled and studied all over the world. In sequence I was Associate Editor of ' The New Standard Dictionary ' (Funk and Wagnalls, New York), Librarian at the Institute for Biological Research at La Jolla, California ; Assistant Director of Exhibits, Panama Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco ; thereupon I spent some seven years in the American Diplomatic Service (Tokyo, Japan ; Lima, Peru ; Tegucigalpa, Honduras ; Berlin, Germany) and in other American Government employ, such as Assistant European Advertising Manager of the United States Shipping Board in London, and was a member of the American Delegation to the International Postal Congress, held at Stockholm in 1924 ; after which I travelled for many years, living now at Tjibinong, Buitenzorg on the island of Java."—ED. I. R.



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

It is a remarkable fact, patent to every unbiassed investigator, that many of the accepted historical data current in western countries, referring to the relations of Islam with the Christian progress on the continent of Europe, are not only thoroughly unreliable, but apparently fraught with falsehood. Where the truth is told, this is done with such profound contempt for the religion of Islam, mixed with such utter misrepresentation of the facts and their surrounding circumstances, that the unbiassed enquirer, if he be earnest enough, is compelled to turn to original sources, where he is more likely to obtain reliable data.

What we have said here about the history of Islam as a whole, is of more particular application to the story of Muhammad, its founder and prophet. The biography of this remarkable man who, unlike some other founders of religions, is definitely proven to be a historical personage, has come down to us, through Christian sources, as a story of a deluded and ambitious, if sincere, reformer ; a mistaken mystic ; a sly and hypocritical preacher ; a clever but unscrupulous impostor ; and even of a sensuous and epileptic maniac !

In this essay we shall deal with the subject in hand as objectively as possible, leaving it to the reader to formulate his own judgment as to the character of the man who was able to effect the most startling revolution that has ever been made in the whole of the world's history in the religious and ethical conceptions of tens of millions of people within one hundred years.

First a few words about Muhammad himself. This prophet and teacher was born in the year 571 of the Christian era. To understand his life and his teaching we must know something concerning the circumstances surrounding him which, however they may differ from our present way of looking at them, do not in the least impair the man's innate brilliance, even as the unsatisfactory setting of a rare jewel does not diminish its inherent value.

## WHAT DOES MUHAMMAD SAY ABOUT JESUS ?

The sixth century, especially in Arabia, was a time of religious and social controversy, of uncouth customs, of martial conquest, of cruel injustice, and of general irregularity. Muhammad was an orphan left to the mercy of his relatives amongst a lawless and warlike people, full of superstitious fears and fancies. Incest was not uncommon ; female children were frequently killed at their birth ; slavery was an age-old custom, and was cruelly applied to conquered enemies. There was war on every side, tribal wars as well as blood feuds, that lasted from generation to generation. Human sacrifices were offered to idols, and the worshippers feasted on the flesh of their victims. Kinsman slew kinsman and neighbour neighbour on the slightest provocation, whilst utter licentiousness took the place of human love and family life.

Muhammad's father had died a few weeks prior to his birth ; his mother died but a few weeks later. Taken into the house of his grandfather, he stayed there until this guardian also left for another world. An uncle, Abu Talib, took the orphan into his home, and there he grew up to manhood. Ever fond of solitude, he spent many an hour alone in the desert, guarding his uncle's flocks.

In early manhood he made two journeys into Syria in behalf of his uncle's business. There he found the Christian sects rending each other to pieces, figuratively and literally.

When Muhammad had reached the age of 25, he married Khadija, a widow of noble birth, fifteen years his senior, and during twenty-five years of an extremely happy married life he won the devotion and the respect of his townsfolk who gave him the title of *Al-Amin*, the Trusted.

One night, while lying self-absorbed, he is called by a mighty voice. Twice the voice called, and twice he endeavoured to avoid hearing it. For the third time the voice addressed him, ' Read out,' it called ; and Muhammad



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asked : 'What shall I read ?' 'Read in the name of thy Lord,' came the answer. Thus he arose and began his preaching. He preached reproof and reform with unswerving purpose, amidst frightful persecutions, insult and outrage.

His wife Khadija was the first to believe in his revelation, to abandon the idolatry of her people. His next disciples were his nearest relatives : his daughter, his son-in-law. Here we have an exception to the saying that no man is a prophet in his own country. He soon gathered a goodly body of disciples about him, but they were persecuted so actively that, upon Muhammad's advice, they sought refuge with the Negus of Abyssinia. Even there the Koraish, his worst enemies, pursued the new converts. Envoys were sent from Mecca to the Negus, demanding that the refugees be given up to them, that they might be put to death for the abjuration of their old religion. The Negus of Abyssinia, a just man, sent for the exiles and asked them if the charge was true. The reply of their spokesman has come down to us, and I will quote it in full for it will show you the spirit of Islam, not only in those early days, but even as it is now. Said the brother of Ali to the Negus :—

O King, we were plunged in the depths of ignorance and of barbarism ; we adored idols, and we lived in unchastity ; we ate dead bodies and we spoke abominations ; we disregarded all humane feeling, as also the duties of hospitality and neighbourliness ; we knew no law but that of the strong ; when God raised up amongst us a man of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty and purity we were aware ; and he called us to the Unity of God and taught us not to liken anything unto Him ; he forbade us the worship of idols, and enjoined us to speak truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful and to regard the rights of our neighbours ; he forbade us to speak evil of women, or to eat the substance of orphans ; he ordered us to fly from vice and to eschew evil, to offer prayers, to render alms, to observe the fast. We have believed in him ; we accepted his teachings and his injunctions : to worship God and not to liken anything unto Him. It is for this reason that our people have risen against us, have persecuted us so as to make us forego the worship of God and to return to the worship of idols of wood and stone, and other abominations. They have tortured us and injured us until, finding no safety among them, we come to thy country and hope thou wilt protect us from their oppressions.

## WHAT DOES MUHAMMAD SAY ABOUT JESUS?

So the Negus did grant them asylum, and the messengers returned to Arabia with empty hands.

It would lead me too far to give you here the entire history of the great Prophet of Islam. You can read about him in many books. The personal side of his life has been made much of by his Christian detractors who forget that the personal life of Jesus or Mary has been similarly misinterpreted by those who wished to show up Christianity in an unfavourable light. But it has been well said: 'By their fruits shall ye know them.' The fruits of Christianity thus far have been far from edifying. The dissensions in the Church, the Crusades, the Holy Inquisition, the Reformation, the conquest of Mexico and Peru, and even the present day intolerance of the Roman Catholic Church, are none of them matters of which Christian nations have reason to be proud. Material progress counts for little if there is not a concomitant progress in spiritual matters. And we so easily forget the magnificent results of Arabic civilization at a time when the western world was plunged in darkness, when Arabic science, poetry, philosophy, architecture, and literature held up the torch of progress and stood on a level entirely unique at the time. If that was the fruit of an evil and immoral life on the part of him who was the initiator of such wonderful progress and enlightenment, by all means, let us have more of such immorality!

To return to our greatly misrepresented Prophet. We have from his hand a literary document entirely unique in the history of religions, a writing of such poetical and elevated diction that few other books can be compared with it in the whole of the world's literature. And its influence upon the world at large has been enormous! It has transformed savage tribes into civilized peoples; it has survived calumny and detraction, it has been a refuge and a consolation to hundreds of millions of human beings,



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and even to-day it stands out for those who have eyes to see as a brilliant torch flaming in a world encompassed by darkness !

This writing is the Qur-án, the sacred book of Islam. It is perhaps the only book definitely known to have been written by the founder of the religion it reveals. It is true that Muhammad has been judged—always by his earlier Christian critics—as a man incapable of producing such magnificent Arabic as that in which the Qur-án is couched. Was he not but an uneducated herdsman ?

It has been suggested that some of the people surrounding the Prophet wrote the sublime verses of the Qur-án for him, most likely one of the Christian slaves attached to him in the early days of his revelation, half a dozen of which are mentioned as a conjecture. Prideaux suggests the name of Salmán, but Sale shows that this is nonsense, as Salmán did not enter the Prophet's life until after the latter's flight to Medina. At any rate, the Christian critics of Islam do not come out of the controversy with flying colours. It is really immaterial whether Muhammad wrote the sublime verses of the Qur-án with his own hand or dictated them to an amanuensis ! The Qur-án, as we have it to-day, is a collection, made shortly after his death,<sup>1</sup> of Muhammad's own writings, poured out by him at intervals during some twenty-three years of religious effort on behalf of his people, for the benefit of the whole of humanity. The word Qur-án or Alqur-án means Gospel, Message, the Evangel.

From the very beginning of this revelation its greatest enemies were the Christians living amongst the people of Arabia. It was principally they who did not scruple to set Muhammad's own compatriots against him at a time when he was not as yet recognized generally in his country as the prophet and reformer that he proved to be.

<sup>1</sup> This is not historically correct. The Qur-án was in book form at the death of the Prophet. Muhammad Ali explodes this theory in his masterly Introduction to his Translation of the Qur-án.—ED. I. R.



## WHAT DOES MUHAMMAD SAY ABOUT JESUS ?

The first western author who mentions Muhammad was Guibertus, Abbot of Vogent, who lived about 1,100 A. D., in his book *Gesta Dei Per Francos*, wherein he says : ' There is a popular belief that there must have been some one who, if I express myself correctly, was called Mathomus. I believe that this godless man cannot have lived so very long ago, for I cannot find that any of the Church teachers have written against his foul teachings.' (In the Orient the first mention of Muhammad by Christian writers was by Joannes Damascenus, who died in A.D. 754).

It is the purpose of this article to show how Muhammad carried out the much vaunted Christian precept ' Love those who hate you ' or the more modern adage ' Give credit where credit is due.' To do this more or less adequately we must not for one moment forget to place ourselves on Muhammad's standpoint and to see and appreciate the conditions under which the great Prophet of Islam carried out his work. The conversion of Arabia and its reclamation from idolatry and infamy had been tried both by the followers of Moses and by those of Jesus, and both of them had ignominiously failed. So that, in the words of the Qur-án, a third Messenger, Muhammad, was sent, who succeeded. The Christians had not succeeded because, as the English historian Muir acknowledges, ' the Christianity of the seventh century was itself decrepit and corrupt,' whilst the Jews, apart from not being an actively proselytizing people, were themselves harassed and persecuted by the Christians.

It was then that Islam came to Arabia. The word *Islam* means ' surrender to God,' whilst the word *Muslim*, of the same root signifies ' one who surrenders himself to God.' Islam succeeded where its predecessors had failed. Nor was it until the torch of knowledge was lighted in Spain by the Muslim invaders that the Renaissance and the Reformation could make their appearance in the Christian world !

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In addition to the above meaning, the primary meaning of the word *Islam* is 'making peace,' the peace of the soul. The name is given to this religion in the Qur-án. And the idea of peace is the dominant idea in Islam. According to the Qur-án the religion of Islam is as wide in its conception as humanity itself. It did not originate from the preaching of the Prophet Muhammad, but it was equally the religion of the prophets who came before him—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus ; in fact, of every prophet of God that appeared in any part of the world. According to the Qur-án, Islam is the natural religion of Man, and the Prophet Muhammad is reported by Abu Huraira to have said : " Every child that is born conforms to the true religion ; then his parents make him a Jew or a Christian, or a Magian. This is the very opposite from the Christian dogma that a child is born in original sin. The Prophet himself was sent, says the Qur-án : " as a peace unto all the nations."

How can this be reconciled with the charge made against Islam that it is a religion of the sword, that it is propagated by the sword, and that it is upheld by the sword ?

First of all the imputation that Islam aims at proselytism by force or that it has been more aggressive than other religions, must be entirely denied. Islam seized the sword in self-defence and held it in self-defence. But it never interfered, or was supposed to interfere as such, with the tenets of any other moral faith. It never persecuted ; it never established an Inquisition. Professor Browne of Cambridge states : " It is often supposed that the choice offered by the warriors of Islam was between the Qur-án and the sword. This, however, is not the fact, for Parsis, as well as Christians and Jews, were permitted to retain their religion, being merely compelled to pay a poll tax, a perfectly just arrangement, inasmuch as non-Muslim subjects of the Caliph were necessarily exempt both from



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the military service and from the alms obligatory on the Prophet's followers." This spirit of Muslim toleration was one of the main articles in an account detailing the 'Apostasies and Treasons of the Moriscos,' drawn up by the Archbishop of Valencia, when in 1602 he recommended their expulsion from the country to Philip III of Spain, stating 'that they commended nothing so much as that liberty of conscience in all matters of religion which the Turks and all other Mussalmans suffer their subjects to enjoy.' These Moriscos were descendants of the original inhabitants of the country, with some admixture of Arab blood. And that the widespread conversions in Persia were not due to force or violence is evidenced by the toleration extended to those who still clung to their ancient faith. For, says the Qur-án:—

Invite men unto the way of thy Lord by wisdom and mild exhortation. <sup>1</sup>

Let there be no compulsion in religion. <sup>2</sup>

Defend yourself against your enemies ; attack them not first ; God hateth the aggressor. <sup>3</sup>

And fight for the religion of God against those who fight against you ; but transgress not (by attacking them first). <sup>4</sup>

Say unto those who have been given the Book and to the ignorant : Do you accept Islam ? Then, if they accept Islam, are they guided aright ; but if they turn away, thy duty is only preaching.

Unto all conquered nations Muhammad offered liberty of worship. The Charter granted by the Prophet to the Christians of Najran in the 9th year of the Hejira, after Islam was fully established in Arabia, forms one of the noblest monuments of enlightened religious tolerance. It runs as follows:—

To Najran and the neighbouring territories the security of God and the pledge of His Prophet are extended for their lives, their religion, and their property ; to the present as well as the absent, and others besides. There shall be no interference with their faith or their observances, nor any change in their rights or privileges. No bishop shall be removed from his bishopric, nor any monk from his monastery, nor any priest from his priesthood, and they shall continue to enjoy everything, great and small, as heretofore. No image or cross shall be destroyed ; they shall not oppress or be oppressed ; they shall not practice the rights of blood vengeance as in the days of ignorance. No tithes shall be levied from them, nor shall they be required to furnish provisions for the troops.

<sup>1</sup> 16 : 125

<sup>2</sup> 2 : 156

<sup>3</sup> 2 : 190

<sup>4</sup> 3 : 19

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The like of this wonderful ordinance Christianity or for the matter of that any other religion cannot shew throughout its history.

After the conquest of Egypt, the Khalif Umar preserved intact the property dedicated to the Christian Churches, and he continued the allowances made by the former government for the support of the priests.

In the reign of Khalif Noman, the Christian Patriarch of Merv wrote a letter to the Bishop of Fars, named Simeon, in which occurs the following :—

The Arabs, who have been given by God the kingdom of the earth, do not attack the Christian faith ; on the contrary, they help us in our religion, they respect our God and our saints, and bestow gifts upon our churches and monasteries.

The principle of *jehád*, the holy war, is not the principle of offence, but purely of defence by the sword. No Muslim may fight for his faith unless attacked or unduly provoked.

Yet the Arabs, united by Islam, set out to conquer the world ! But that was purely a war of conquest, as there have been and will be so many other wars of conquest in the history of the nations. It was not a *jehád*, a ‘ holy war,’ in the sense that the faith must be defended. The Arabs, however, carried their new faith with them wherever they went, as did the Christians to Mexico and Peru. But, instead of destroying, they built a world empire.

The extraordinary rapidity with which Islam spread over the surface of the globe is one of the most wonderful phenomena in the history of religions. Westward to Spain and eastward beyond Indus, the Muslims found themselves, only one hundred years after the death of Muhammad—in the 8th century A. D.—masters of an empire greater than that of Rome at the zenith of its power. And that this Muslim conquest was not a mere effort to impose their religion upon the conquered is evidenced by the civilizing influences it exercised, as, for example, in Baghdad and



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Cordova. Cordova, in southern Spain, reached its highest point of glory under Abderrahman II, called the Great (912—962 A.D.). The great riches that he had gathered he employed for the improvement of Cordova, making it one of the most glorious cities in the world. Chantrel tells us that it counted over a million inhabitants, that there were some 600 mosques, 50 hospitals, upwards of 80 schools, and 900 public baths. (When in 1212 the Christians took Cordova, the very first thing they did was to close all the public baths!) Four hundred cities vied with Cordova in greatness and prosperity, and the arts, crafts, and commerce flourished exceedingly. The learned and the poets increased the glory of Abderrahman's court, whilst 17 universities, a medical school—the only one that existed at that time in Europe—and 70 libraries spread over the Khalifate gave a new impulse to the intellectual movements that were originated by the Khalif. East and west admired the glories of Cordova. Baghdad ran it a close second under Harun-Ar-Rashid and Al-Mamun. The works of Aristotle were translated into Arabic, whence they later spread over Europe. The Arabic universities became so famous that they were only paralleled in this respect by the schools of ancient Greece. Many thousands of young men from the neighbouring Christian countries travelled to Spain to study at these centres of learning. Thus the civilization of Europe is directly to be ascribed to Muslim greatness and tolerance. The Muslims gave Europe the mulberry tree, maize, sugarcane, the windmill, and many other things. The art of war, commerce, industry and seamanship took an unprecedented flight. Medicine, chemistry, astronomy were developed by the Arabs and transmitted to European savants. Oriental philosophy reached Europe through Arabian influence.

I have mentioned these facts to indicate that the so-called ' holy war ' of the Muslim is nothing more nor less

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than religious defence, and that unprovoked religious attack on the part of the follower of the Prophet is not in accordance with his precepts, and is entirely foreign to the spirit of the religion he came to propagate.

The fundamental principles of Islam are given in the very beginning of the Holy Qur-án, which opens with the words :—

This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard against evil ; to those who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend benevolently out of what We have given them ; and who believe in that which has been revealed unto you and in that which was revealed before you ; and these are sure of the hereafter.

In the teachings of the Prophet, Allah signifies a monotheistic God, but so utterly pure and lofty that only in the Upanishads is there a similar conception. God must not be conceived under any symbol, nor mirrored in any image ; yet He is ‘ closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet.’

Islam came to establish universal brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God, and declares the entire human race to be one family. All people are a single nation ; so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners.<sup>1</sup> It does not suffer differences either in creed or in colour to affect the fraternal relations between all human beings. For this purpose all barriers of caste, of colour, and of descent have been removed, and virtue is made the only test of greatness. This universal brotherhood of man is beautifully sung by Sadi, the great poet of Persia, in the *Gulistan* (Story 13) :

The children of Adam are limbs of one another,  
Being, in their creation, but from one single essence ;  
When Time one member involves in pain,  
No ease remains for the other limbs.  
If unconcerned of another's woes,  
Thou art unworthy the name of man.

<sup>1</sup> 2 : 213



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Muhammad's personal character has come down to us in considerable detail, but is either ignored or else twisted out of shape and misrepresented by the European writers.

He was a simple man of modest demeanour and moderate habits. He would do all sorts of things with his own hands. He would assist his wives in their household duties, milk his own goats, patch his own clothes, and mend his own shoes. In person he would tie his camel and look after it. In the construction of the Mosque and in digging the ditch round Medina he worked like a labourer with the others. He would go shopping, not only for his own household, but also for his neighbours and the sick and ailing. When a certain man wanted to kiss his hand, he withdrew it remarking that that was the behaviour of the non-Arabs towards their kings. Even if he received an invitation from a slave, he would accept it, and he would take his meals in the company of all classes of people. When in company, there was nothing that would make him conspicuous from the rest of those present.

He never flatly refused a beggar. He would feed the hungry, himself sometimes going without food. Nor did he ever keep any money in his possession. While on his death-bed he sent for whatever there was in the house and distributed it among the poor.

Negro slaves were accorded the same position of honour as the Qureish leaders. He was the champion of the oppressed and the ill-treated. He was very fond of children and would stroke their heads in passing. Humble and meek to the extent of self-effacement, he yet possessed the greatest courage. Whilst plots were being hatched in Mecca against his person, he went about fearlessly, day and night : but he advised his companions to leave the city and betake themselves to a safer place.

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For he was a fearless and courageous man and was afraid of none but the Almighty God. On the battlefield he fought in the ranks, but when he had conquered his enemies he showed mercy and clemency to an extent that was most extraordinary for his time and race. It is known of Muhammad having instructed his warriors : —

In avenging the injuries inflicted upon us, molest not the harmless inmates of domestic seclusion. spare the weakness of female sex, injure not the infants or those who are bedridden. Abstain from demolishing the dwellings of unresisting inhabitants ; destroy not the means of their subsistence, nor their fruit trees, and touch not the palm.

At the battle of Uhud, when he was wounded and fell down, a comrade asked him to curse his persecutors. His reply was : “ I have not been sent to curse, but as an inviter to good and to mercy.” When asked to pay the Bedouins, who had treated him harshly, in their own coin, he replied that he never returned evil for evil. And he enjoined his followers “ in no case to use deceit or perfidy, or to kill a woman or child.”

He abolished all blood-feuds, which were rampant in Arabia. In his last sermon, shortly before his death, he says :

“ . . . And your slaves, see that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear ; and if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then part from them, for they are the servants of the Lord and are not to be harshly treated. . . . Know that all Muslims are brothers unto one another. Ye are one brotherhood. Nothing which belongs to another is lawful unto his brother, unless freely given out of good will. Guard yourselves from committing injustice. . . .”

After having finished this sermon, Muhammad exclaimed : “ O Lord, I have delivered my message and accomplished my work ! ” and that same year he passed away.

Even to animals he was humane, being very much in advance in this respect of the Arab character. He said :—

Fear God with regard to animals ; ride them when they are fit to be ridden, and get off when they are tired. Verily, there are rewards for those who ever do good to dumb animals and who give them water to drink.



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He spoke of a man who drew water from a well in order to quench the thirst of a dog, as having earned Paradise by this act of kindness. And the Qur-án says:—

There is no beast on earth nor bird that flieth with wings, but the same is a people like unto you—unto the Lord shall they return.

With all his religious fervour he was a broadminded man, for how else could he have declared that “ difference of opinion is a blessing ?” And that he was a practical thinker is evidenced by his statement : “ Do you love your Creator ? Then love your fellow beings first ! ” But his most beautiful saying is, you will agree : “ Paradise lies at the feet of the mothers.”

His wife Khadija bore him four sons and four daughters. It was not until after her death that he married again. His favourite wife, Ayesha, whom he married three years later, used to say that she was not as jealous of her fellow-wives as she was of Khadija, for he ever praised her as a model for her sex. When Ayesha was asked as to Muhammad’s morals, she replied : “ His morals are the Qur-án.”

One word about Muhammad’s visions, during which he was inspired to write his magnificent Suras. I will quote A. T. C. Thompson, to give you an idea of the bigoted western attitude on the part of Christian authors : “ What are these visions ? ” asks Thompson. “ Must we assume in the case of the Prophet such an innate tendency to cheat and to mislead and be dishonest, that they were sheer inventions, or must we conclude that there was indeed a certain peculiar psychological state ? Turpin, in his ‘ Histoire de la Vie de Mahomet,’ accepts the former theory. But the more usual view, held ever since the earliest centuries after the Hijera, is that he felt himself indeed psychically affected, and this condition is usually regarded as a kind of epileptic fit. This is accepted by

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Theophanes in the early 9th, and by Zonares in the 12th century, and later by Maracci, Relandus, and, in our own times, by Nöldeke, Weil, Arnold, Scholl, and many others. Modern medical science, however, does not accept that an epileptic could live so healthy and so long an active life in the full possession of his mental faculties. Nay," concludes Thompson, "we had better think of him as subject to the psychical paroxysms of the hysteric, of the zealot whipped up by religious fanaticism."

But rather than worry about what Christians have said about Muhammad and the Qur-án, let us see what Muhammad and his wonderful and beautiful and spiritual book have to say about Christianity and Christ. I shall confine myself to the references in the Qur-án to the Christian religion and its great exponent to prove that Muhammad, at any rate, never taught anything concerning Christianity of which he need be ashamed, and that he may be regarded as one of the foremost and most broad-minded religious teachers the world has known. So that, whenever we hear of Muhammadan excesses against Christians, these certainly were not justified by the teachings of the Prophet, and either were the result of deliberate provocation or else are barefaced misrepresentations on the part of bigoted historians.

However, let us turn to the Qur-án itself and see what that wonderful book has to tell us about Christ and Christianity. I give the Arabic text as well as the English, thus quoting chapter and verse concerning any of my contentions.

The Qur-án is purely monotheistic. This monotheism is the fundament upon which Islam is constructed. It does not recognize vicarious atonement in any shape or form, under any guise. In one of his inspirations Muhammad is told: "Say: What! shall I ask a lord other than Allah? and He is the Lord of all things;



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and no soul earns (evil) but against itself, and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another ; then to your Lord is your return . . .”<sup>1</sup> indicating that the Qur-án distinctly rejects any intermediary between God and man. They are in direct contact, and in constant contact. So the follower of Muhammad does not pray to Muhammad, but only to God, to Allah. For this he conceives to be the duty of a prophet or of an apostle, to revert the minds of his hearers to God, so that they may never turn into the wrong direction.

Muhammad does not by any means regard himself as the only apostle or prophet sent to mankind by Allah. He is the latest of those sent. Says the Qur-án :—

And certainly We sent Noah and Abraham, and We placed in their offspring the (gift of) prophecy and the Scripture ; so there are among them that go aright, though most of them are transgressors. Then We made our apostles to follow in their footsteps, and We sent Jesus, son of Mary, afterwards, and We gave him the Gospel ; and We put into the heart of those who followed him kindness and mercy ; and (as for) monkery, they innovated it : We did not prescribe it for them.<sup>2</sup>

And again, we find the following, where Allah says unto Muhammad :—

Surely, We have revealed unto you, as We revealed unto Noah and the prophets after him, and We revealed unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and unto Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and We gave a Scripture unto David. And (We sent) apostles that We have mentioned to you before, and apostles that We have not mentioned unto you<sup>3</sup>

Thus we see that, according to Islam, there have been many apostles of Allah prior to Muhammad, apostles whose names we know, and such as we do not know. Moreover, Muhammad says :—

In whatever Books God hath sent down do I believe,<sup>4</sup>

That the apostles of Allah did not have an easy time of it, is recognised in the Qur-án in the following verse :—

And most certainly We gave Moses the Book, and We sent apostles after him, one after another, and strengthened him with the holy spirit. What ! whenever then an apostle came to you with that which your souls did not desire, you were insolent, so you called some liars and some you slay.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 : 65    <sup>2</sup> 57 : 26—7    <sup>3</sup> 4 : 163, 4    <sup>4</sup> 42 : 15    <sup>5</sup> 2 : 87

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According to the Qur-án :—" Jesus, son of Mary, said : O children of Isræl ! surely I am an apostle of Allah to you, verifying that which is before me of the Thorah, and giving the gospel of an apostle who will come after me, his name being Ahmad," thus showing that, according to the Qur-án, Jesus was well aware of this succession of prophets and preachers, for he referred to those who went before him and to his immediate successor Ahmad, which is but another name for Muhammad.<sup>1</sup>

And Muhammad's respect for other sacred scriptures is clearly indicated in the following verse :—

Say : O followers of the Book ! You follow no good until you keep up the Thorah and the Gospel and that which is revealed unto you from your Lord.<sup>2</sup>

A prophet of God is one who must be heeded and believed, says the Qur-án :—

Those who disbelieve from among the children of Israel were abhorred by the tongue of David and Jesus, son of Mary : this was because they disobeyed and exceeded the limits.<sup>3</sup>

There is always enmity in the hearts of those who do not believe in Allah for those who do. Says the Qur-án :—

Verily, you will find the most violent of people in enmity with those who believe, (to be) the Jews and those who are polytheists ; and you will certainly find the nearest in friendship to those who believe, (to be) those who say : We are Christians.<sup>4</sup>

The Qur-án tells us that the followers of Jesus certainly obtained through him a greater knowledge of God :—

O you who believe ! be helpers of Allah, as Jesus son of Mary said unto (his) disciples : Who are my helpers in the cause of Allah ? The disciples said : We are helpers (in the cause) of Allah. So a party of the children of Isræl believed and another party disbelieved ; then We aided those who believed against their enemy, and they prevailed.<sup>5</sup>

But with all that, Muhammad was strongly opposed to acknowledging the superhuman nature of Jesus. Says the Moslem : As prophets are human beings, they must

<sup>1</sup> See also John 14 : 26 ; 15 : 26 ; 16 : 7.

<sup>2</sup> 5 : 68

<sup>3</sup> 5 : 78

<sup>4</sup> 5 : 82

<sup>5</sup> 61 : 14



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be subject to the same laws as other human beings. No one can be a model to men who is not a human being himself, showing how human frailties can be overcome. For this reason a divine incarnation, or God in a human body, can no more serve as a model to men as a man can serve as a model to a horse. If Jesus was sinless because he was God incarnate, he cannot serve as a model to us who are not gods : we need a mortal to show us how to avoid the pitfalls with which we as mortals are surrounded. It is in reference to this idea, and replying to the Christian concept of the divinity of Jesus, that the Qur-án tells us :—

The Messiah, son of Mary, is but an apostle ; Indeed ere this apostles have passed away. And his mother was a truthful woman : they both used to eat food !<sup>1</sup>

So we see that also the divinity of Mary, the mother of Jesus, is somewhat humorously denied. They both used to eat food : that is to say, they both were in all respects human.

In addition, we have a strong Qur-ánic protest against ascribing to the Deity any progenital human attributes, in the Surah called *Al-Ikhlás* (the Unity), one of the earliest revelations, the Qur-án says :—

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Say : He Allah, is One. Allah is He on Whom all depends. He begets not, nor is He begotten ; and none is like Him.<sup>2</sup>

In its four short sentences this chapter stresses the fundamental errors of many religions. It proclaims the absolute unity of the Divine Being, rejecting thereby the doctrine of the Trinity, for the Unity it enjoins is absolute. Let me add here that, when a Muslim wants to be quite sure of a convert, especially of one who is converted from Christianity, he makes him recite this 112th Chapter ! Muhammad is very indignant at the idea of God having a son. Says the Qur-án :—

The heavens may almost be rent thereat, and the earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down in pieces, that they ascribe a son to the Beneficent God. And it is not worthy of the Beneficent God that He should take a son !<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 5 : 72

<sup>2</sup> 112 : 1, 4

<sup>3</sup> 19 : 90, 2

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As a matter of fact, Muhammad absolutely denies that Jesus ever proclaimed himself as God, for, says the Qur-án :—

And when Allah will say : O Jesus son of Mary ! did you say to men, take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah, he will say : Glory be to Thee ! it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to (say) !<sup>1</sup>

And furthermore, when addressing the Christians, the Qur-án says, exhorting them :—

O followers of the Book ! do not exceed the limits of your religion and do not speak against Allah, but (speak) the truth : the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, is an apostle of Allah and His word, that he communicated to Mary and (which is) an inspiration from Him. Believe ye therefore in Allah and His apostles, and say not : Three ! Desist, it is better for you : Allah is but one God. Far be it from His glory that He should have a son : whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His ; and Allah is sufficient as a Protector.<sup>2</sup>

Yet it is sometimes maintained that the Qur-án leaves room for the conception that Jesus was conceived by Mary through the immediate action of the Divine Will. But even so, this would not, on that score, cause him to be a product of any Divine act of procreation. In such case he would have been brought forth as a simple act of creation, an act which for God, the Creator of all the worlds, could not provide any excessive difficulties. Did not God do the same thing in the case of Adam, although up to this day no one seems ever to have thought it necessary to include Adam on this account in the Trinity, the more so as one of the Qur-án texts, upon which such a notion would be based, compares Jesus in this sense with Adam (Surah 3, v. 58), whilst the virginity of Mary at the time of Jesus' birth could still be accepted in view of the following text :—

She (Mary) said : How shall I have a child and no mortal has yet touched me, nor have I been unchaste ? He (the Angel) said : Even so ; your Lord says : It is easy to Me, and that We may make him unto a sign to men and a mercy from Us ; and it is a matter already decreed. So she conceived him (Jesus) ; whereupon she withdrew herself with him unto a remote place.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 5 : 116

<sup>2</sup> 4 : 17

<sup>3</sup> 19 : 20, 2



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The Qur-án makes Jesus a sublime figure, but leaves him entirely human, although exalted above all other human beings of his time and generation. Listen to this :—

He (Jesus) said : Surely, I am a servant of Allah ! He has given me the Book and made me a prophet ; and He has made me blessed wherever I may be. And He has enjoined on me prayer and alms as long as I live, and (to be) dutiful unto my mother ; nor has He made me insolent, unblessed. And peace on me on the day I was born, and on the day I die, and on the day I am raised to life. Such is Jesus the son of Mary : (this is) the saying of truth about which they dispute ! <sup>1</sup>

All throughout the Qur-án Jesus is accorded great honour as a prophet and a teacher, the predecessor of Muhammad and the successor of a long chain of prophets that have gone before him. *He* also had to fight dissension and unbelief, and had to appeal to those around him to follow the path of God, of Allah. Says the Qur-án :—

But when Jesus perceived unbelief on their part, he said : Who will be my helpers in Allah's way ? The disciples said : We are helpers (in the way) of Allah, we believe in Allah and bear witness that we are submitting ones : Our Lord ! we believe in what Thou has revealed and we follow the apostle : so write us down with those that bear witness ! <sup>2</sup>

And to show to what extent the teaching of Jesus was an essential teaching to the mind of Muhammad, I will quote :—

When Allah said : O Jesus ! I will cause you to die and exalt you in My presence, and clear you of those who disbelieve, and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve, to the day of resurrection. <sup>3</sup>

For Jesus was not born a prophet, as little as any other of God's prophets were born as such. They became prophets and teachers by virtue of their understanding and their perfect obedience to the will of God, by virtue of their utter trust and belief, irrespective of what others might say or think. Therefore says the Qur-án :—

And He (Allah) will teach him the Book and the wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel, and (make him) an apostle unto the children of Israel. <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 19 : 30—34

<sup>2</sup> 3 : 51, 52

<sup>3</sup> 3 : 54

<sup>4</sup> 3 : 47, 48

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The unbelievers objected to Jesus being shown as great and greater respect by Muhammad than their own idols. For in their eyes Jesus was a god, an idol of the Christians, and why should not the same honour be shown to their own gods as to a foreign god? But Muhammad made it quite clear to them that Jesus was not a god, nor a son of God, but a prophet of God, who was an example of virtue and humaneness, a model according to which they could shape their own behaviour. The Qur-án therefore says:—

And when a description of the son of Mary is given, lo! your people raise a clamour thereat. And they say: Are our gods better, or is he? They do not set it forth to you save by way of disputation: nay, they are a contentious people! He was but a servant on whom We bestowed favour, and We made him an example for the children of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

And now we come to a very interesting point indeed, namely the crucifixion. The Qur-án does not accept the death by crucifixion, but regards it as an established fact that Jesus lived to a ripe old age. And one may, indeed, read into the very Gospels that Jesus did not *die* upon the cross!

In this connection the following points are of interest:

- (1) Jesus remained on the cross but a few hours, according to the traditional Gospel story, much shorter than was necessary to cause the otherwise very lingering death.
- (2) The two men crucified at the same time as Jesus were still alive when taken down.
- (3) The two criminals, after being taken down, had their legs broken, but in the case of Jesus this was not done, as he was apparently dead, though he may have been in a state of coma.
- (4) When Jesus' side was pierced, blood rushed out, so he had not yet died.
- (5) Pilate was very much surprised when he heard that Jesus had died so unusually soon.
- (6) Jesus was not buried, as were the two criminals, but was given in the care of Joseph of Arithmathea, one of his disciples, who

<sup>1</sup> 43 : 57—59



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looked after him and took him to a spacious cavern. (7) When the tomb was seen on the third day, the stone was removed from its mouth, which indicated a normal exit and not a supernatural one. (8) Jesus probably disguised himself, as Mary Magdalene, when she saw him, took him to be a gardener. (9) When his disciples saw him, his wounds were still visible, and he ate with his disciples. (10) He walked by the side of two of his disciples to Galilee, indicating a flight rather than an ascension to heaven. (11) In all post-crucifixion appearances Jesus seems to have been afraid of being seen, showing that he was in hiding and in fear of discovery. (12) Heb. 5 : 7 seems to make it acceptable that he was saved from death after he uttered the words on the cross : “ Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani ! ”

Whether the arguments adduced for this purpose are to be taken seriously or not, is a matter that each one must decide for himself. Enough, however, if we state that the Muslim tradition credits Jesus with finally having reached Cashmere, where he lived to a good old age and where what is supposed to be his tomb is still held in the greatest reverence. Indeed, some twenty years ago, a traveller in Tibet, Notowitsh, discovered an ancient manuscript in the library of an out of the way Buddhist monastery, giving the history of Jesus after his escape from Palestine, which manuscript he translated and published. Here also we hear of Jesus having reached Cashmere, where he settled down as a monk and a preacher in a Buddhist monastery.

So we must not be too greatly surprised when we discover several references in the Holy Qur-án where Jesus is stated to have lived to a ripe old age. We find, for example, the following :—

When the angels said : O Mary : surely Allah gives you good news with a word from Him (of one) whose name is the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter, and of those who are made near (to Allah). And he shall speak to the people when in the cradle and when of old age, and (he shall be) one of the worthy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 3 : 44, 45

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The miracles of Jesus are accepted by the Qur-án, and also certain traditional miracles are referred to in the following sentences :

When Allah will say : O Jesus son of Mary ! Remember My favour on you and your mother, when I strengthened you with the holy spirit. You spoke to the people in the cradle and when of old age, and when I taught you the Book and the Wisdom and the Truth and the Gospel. And when you determined out of clay a thing like the form of a bird by My permission, then you breathed into it and it became a bird by My permission ; and you healed the blind and the leprous by My permission ; and when you brought forth the dead by My permission. And when I revealed unto the disciples, saying, Believe in Me and My apostle, they said : We believe and bear witness that we submit. <sup>1</sup>

One more interesting fact may be mentioned here in connection with Mary, the mother of Jesus. The Jews cherished their ancient traditions that Mary had been violated by a Roman soldier, of Greek nationality, called Panthera, of which union Jesus was supposed to have been the issue. Jesus therefore was called by his father's name, namely, Jesus ben Panthera, by the Jews. And as this violation had taken place, according to the Toldosh Joshua tradition, during Mary's period of menstruation, he was also called mockingly "mamser ben haniddah," meaning "bastard born out of connection during menstruation." In John 8 : 41 we read, in reference hereto, that the Jews, when Jesus reproaches them, taunt him saying : ' We be not born of fornication ; we have one Father, even God.' But Muhammad will have nothing of such libel, saying :—

And for their unbelief, and for their having uttered against Mary a grievous calumny, and their saying : Surely, we have killed the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, the apostle of Allah ; and they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him (to death), but they were left in doubt. <sup>2</sup>

These, then, are the direct references in the Qur-án to Jesus, the prophet and messenger of Allah. There are also indirect references, where the Christian doctrines, as current in Muhammad's day, are criticised as having

<sup>1</sup> 5 : 110, 111

<sup>2</sup> 4 : 156, 157



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been corrupted. An example of such is the statement : “ That no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another, and that man shall have nothing but what he strives for ” <sup>1</sup> opposing the Christian doctrine of vicarious atonement, and emphasizing what the Buddhists, Hindoos, and Theosophists call Karina, or just reward for action. For, says the Muslim, if God would forgive sins without requiring from man any compensation ; if He would show mercy ; then there was no need of atonement, and hence no need of a son as a sacrifice. The Christian religion, according to the Muslim, is self-contradictory in this respect, for does not the Lord’s prayer state : “ Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,” thus leaving no room for any atonement or special sonship ?

Also, says the Muslim, just as the Jews were obdurate regarding the acceptance of Christianity, so the Christians are similarly disinclined to accept Islam. The followers of Muhammad, therefore, blame the Christians with the same degree of justice as the Christians blame the Jews.

And that brings us to a point that is particularly favourable to Islam, namely, the universality of the Prophet Muhammad’s mission. This is indicated by the opening chapter of the Qur-án, called *Al-Fatihah*, one of Muhammad’s first revelations, where Allah is referred to *not* as the Lord of the Arabs, but as the Lord of all the worlds and of all the nations. This chapter runs :

‘ In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful ; All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, The Beneficent, the Merciful : Master of the Day of Requital ! Thee do we serve, and Thee do we beseech for help ! Guide us upon the right path, The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours : Not of those upon whom wrath is brought down, Nor of those who go astray ! ’

All the preceding prophets were sent but to one people. Even Christ is supposed to have said to a non-Israelite woman that he was “ not sent but unto the lost sheep of

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the House of Israel." (Matth. 15 : 24), and, being pressed again, answered : ' It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs.' (Matth. 15 : 26). But Muhammad claims to have been sent to blot out all limitations of nationality, race and colour, and Islam amply testifies to his success. It is indeed a religion of universal human brotherhood. As soon as a man enters the fold of Islam his particular race, colour or nationality sinks into insignificance before the vaster conception of humanity for which Islam opens the mind. Muhammad was indeed an apostle, and a very successful apostle, of the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God.

Does this mean that we must all of us turn Muhammadians ? Not necessarily, but it does mean that, before repeating parrot-like the cry of our prejudiced ancestors as to the worthlessness of Islam, we should give credit where credit is due and appreciate the true inwardness of the Muhammad's revelation. Up to the present most of us have been content to look upon Muhammad and his religion, and the results thereof to the peoples to which it came, through biassed and unworthy spectacles. Let us take off these coloured glasses, and see things in their true light !

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## OUR NEXT NUMBER

As usual, owing to the month of Ramdhān our next issue will be a double number for January-February 1933.

EDITOR.



# PSYCHIC ASPECTS OF ISLAM

BY HORACE LEAF, F. R. G. S.

[ The following article is taken from the well-known weekly, *The Two Worlds*. We reproduce it because it emphasises the affinity between Spiritualism and Islam as also the ever-increasing importance of propounding the teaching of Islam to the Western world.—ED. I. R.]

The more one meditates on the life of the Prophet Muhammad the more does the psychic element stand out. More perhaps than with any other religious genius is spiritual inspiration to be observed with him ; and from the Spiritualists' point of view, it is extremely interesting that Muslims are prepared to admit the fact. There is no pretence that the founder of their religion was an incarnation of God, nor even that he received his inspiration direct from God. They regard the Great First Cause in a light too exalted to claim that He personally inspires anyone in a purely mystical sense.

They believe that revelations to prophets come through spiritual intermediaries, as that is the only way in which the imperfect mind of man can be brought into touch with the perfect mind of God. The intermediary agent they call 'Malak,' which means 'angel' and originally meant 'power.' In the case of Muhammad this agent was called 'Gabriel' which literally means the 'servant of Allah.'

Furthermore, they attribute to all true prophets the same agent, so that, to Muslims, all prophets have received their revelation through a 'servant of God.' They also believe that true prophets come in the spirit of some previous prophet, and hold that the previous prophet that came to Muhammad was Moses, the great Jewish patriarch and leader. In the same way John the Baptist, they believe, came in the spirit of Elias, the Jewish prophet. I do not pretend fully to understand the significance of this claim, as it does not mean reincarnation, and yet it does not seem to mean the independent identity of the two

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personalities. Connected with the idea is something mystical which evidently raises the subject beyond ordinary logic. But one thing is clear ; for all practical purposes there is conceived to be direct communication between the spirit of the departed and the living.

Perhaps we Spiritualists may find in this a great truth, which at this early stage of our discovery does not make it wise for us to be informed of this subtle metaphysical distinction. I think I can do no better than quote the words of Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad, Acting Imam of the Mosque, Woking, in a letter to me.

“ Thus, John the Baptist appeared in the spirit of Elias. This appearance in Islamic phraseology is called ‘ Zillī ’ or ‘ Burūjī ’ appearance or ‘ Mathil ’ ship. It is a kind of re-incarnation, but Islam is opposed to transmigration. Holy Prophet Muhammad is regarded by Muslims as the *Mathil-i-Musa*, i.e., a similar spiritual re-incarnation of Moses. Evidently this belief gives the Spiritualists a convenient ground for building up a theory of their own to explain the position of Muhammad. To me, who has for some time been thinking much on the creeds of Islam and Spiritualism, it appears that, excepting one point, each of them runs into the other. This one exception is that all spiritual communications should be sought, according to Islam, through the Universal Mind.’

There is a good deal of sound spiritual sense in this advice which no seriously-minded Spiritualist will quarrel with. To seek spiritual communications through the Universal Mind would not mean that we should not receive communications from our departed friends, but would raise the standard of many students of psychic science to a higher plane. It is doubtful whether scientific investigators who dislike the introduction of religion into psychical research could complain of such an attitude, since recently even eminent scientists, experimenting in

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purely secular branches of science, have been forced to admit that the orderliness of the known universe compels them to conclude that there is something like a Universal Mind.

Students of comparative religion who adopt the popular idea that Muhammad was far too truculent to have been a really spiritual character, cannot deny that the result of his inspiration is almost without parallel in the extraordinary benefits it bestowed upon humanity. Not only did it civilize and unite the Arabs as a race, but it raised them in an incredibly short time to a foremost place among the nations of the world. It virtually opened the minds of people which until then had remained more or less sealed, and enabled them for a time to outstrip their Christian contemporaries.

Muslims cradled science, modern pharmacy digs its roots into the original discoveries of Arab therapeutics. When the Muslims conquered Spain they civilized it, and for hundreds of years made it the most advanced part of Europe.

That Muhammad's message was needed is shown by the fact that six hundred years of Christianity failed to convince large sections of Asia and Africa that that religion was the true religion. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity inclined to turn them from rather than to religion. This cannot have been owing to the inability of these people to think as metaphysically or spiritually as Europeans, as history conclusively shows that the Eastern mind is more mystically inclined than that of the more logical Westerner.

If results justify claims, then Muhammad needs no more to justify his. Nor must we forget that whilst Christianity gradually fails to convince even Christendom of the justness of its claims, and certainly fails to convince



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the more advanced non-Christian races, Islam moves steadily forward.

There are many reasons for this, but none more effective than the simplicity of the claim that there is only one God. All research into the ultimate nature of the Universe inclines to the belief that it is a unity, and that instinctively gives rise to the notion that if there is a Creator He must be One, and not several. Whether this will ultimately be justified none can at present be sure, but centuries of scientific research and philosophical reflection tend to confirm the notion.

Perhaps the next great source of Islam's appeal is its insistence on the equality of man. It may be true that at bottom all great religions have the same conception, but Islam does nothing to obscure it. No intricate and obscure doctrine is introduced for the purpose of maintaining religious authority, thus disfiguring teaching. It is a plain claim maintained in every mosque.

A third cause of its remarkable appeal is its assurance that man may seek for knowledge anywhere. No check on investigation is laid down. This accounts for the tolerance which is so charming a characteristic of the average Muslim, for Islam is no more responsible for its fanatics than Christ is for Christian fanaticism.

Here are three principles which every Spiritualist realizes conform with the teaching coming through to them from the spirit world, and taking all things into consideration, they must feel that the inspirers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad were such as they themselves seek.

# ISLAM AND THE PRESENT GENERATION IN EUROPE.

BY OMAR ROLF EHRENFELS.

(Continued from vol. XX, p. 391).

## II

### *A Study of Islam from the standpoint of the New Generation in Europe.*

As we have seen in the first part of our article, the Islamic psychology leads, through frankness and the acknowledgment of the earthy part of human nature, to peace, not only the peace of weapons, but also of those energies and tendencies which lead to the manifestation of brute force. I have designated the acknowledgment of this "earth," materially and symbolically as characteristic of the social, artistic and devotional forms of the culture of Islamic nations.

The second part of this article will be devoted to the question of how far this the young post-war Europe and discontented generation shows similar tendencies and hopes.

Let us remember, to start with, that this same younger generation is seldom free from political fanaticism and, therefore, there are only a few individuals conscious of the underlying ideals, and still fewer who have already perceived that these underlying ideals correspond to Islamic culture. Nevertheless, the existence of this affinity is obvious from the resemblance between the typical, cultural and artistic products of post-war Europe and Islam. We shall follow the same examples used in the first part of our article, discussing first the matrimonial law.

Old-fashioned Europe had only one form of matrimonial law, that is, absolute monogamy. Love-making or any sexual relations, apart from this, were repressed; an exaggerated form of this suppression is historically evident in commissions on public morality, set up by Maria

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Theresa, the Empress of Austria. Thus, erotic hypocrisy flourished to an intolerable degree, and later, there arose in Europe, a lifeless cynicism in sexual relations.

The post-war generation feels vaguely that in the mysteries of erotic love lies a key to a harmonic cultural life, and that is only insured if the different forms of erotic relations are organized by a new and juster law of matrimony, so that a divorced woman or a man who is living with more than one woman in an honest way of life, should not be considered outcastes or criminals. The various attempts at reforming the European matrimonial law seek frankness and honesty by the toleration of what cannot be forbidden, and by the education of the qualities of the soul. The correspondence of this to Islam is not yet conceived of by the younger generation only because of different prejudices on the European side and extreme formalities on that of Islam, such as the exaggerated veil system. However, the resemblance between the demand of the younger generation in Europe and the findings of Islamic culture and civilization should become obvious in a few years.

The second example is of *Islamic art and style of mechanical and useful art*.

The correspondence is particularly marked in architecture and painting. The modern European buildings tend to realize the simple and smooth forms of cubes which characterize the Arabian towns and villages. The form of the cube has been recognized as one of the oldest symbols. Owing to lack of space we cannot enter into details in this respect, but would only mention the use of stone parapets and ornamental relief. Modern European painting aims, like that of Islam, at the expression of elementary things, and deep emotion without the use of the figurate. The direct form symbol, which tried to represent the platonic conception of objects without the



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round about method of utilizing the human or animal forms of the body is more in the forefront of European art than the representation of the earthly bodies of man and animal.

Still greater correspondence exists between the Islamic and the modern European style of dress and domestic furniture. The correspondence is not merely external, nor accidental, but it springs from the same impulse in both cases. The earth on which we stand and the body in which our soul dwells is not ignored by the young generation or hypocritically slurred over as something unimportant. The modern European culture, too, tries quite in the same way as does the Islamic to ennoble the earthy part of ourselves. It is only thus that we can interpret the reduction and simplification of modern European dress as well as its adaptation to the natural forms of the human body.

The same idea is expressed in the love of sports and bathing, and of exposing the body to the sunshine. We also see European women wearing pyjama, trousers and sandal shoes at the seaside, even sometimes at home in private, instead of uncomfortable frocks. The same parallels are much more evident in the style of furniture and the decoration of flats. Now we find low set tables, chairs, divans which do not compel one to sit unnaturally and erect as did those of old-fashioned Europe.

All these new fashion facilitate the natural movements of the body. There are to be found many modern European articles of furniture which bear the stamp of relation to the Islamic style, but, on the other hand, I am sorry to say that we find in the houses of many rich orientals in Asia and Africa, old-fashioned European furniture which is not only inartistic and in bad taste, but also quite unsuited for hot climates. These anomalous objects are influencing their owners in a most unfortunate way,

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fostering in their unnatural habits already out of fashion even in Europe itself. The modern European style helps the young generation, indirectly, to understand Islamic culture.

Of special interest are the changes in the social structure of young Europe. The political parties still fight fanatically against one another, and it is most difficult to say which of the many parties will ever gain the upper hand. One may, however, foresee, that very likely a brotherhood free from distinction of classes, promoting a new society which does not yield any more to capitalism and money but only to vigour of soul and moral ideals, will formulate. And if we call to mind the time of the early Caliphs of Islam, we have a socialistic republic, at the head of which stands a president (or a caliph) endowed with full cultural and spiritual powers, and we again find tendencies in modern Europe similar to the social structure of Islam.

It is only in the building of churches that we cannot till now find a parallel between the young generation of Europe and Islam, because this generation has not as yet have to build churches which would express the desires of their new spirit. This omission is due to the fact that the new religious and inward life of this young generation in Europe cannot be satisfied by the religious forms of Christian sects which have abandoned the clearness and lofty self-denial of Jesus, the oriental and the Prophet of God, and have sought political power and indulgence in worldly material wealth. The most typical individuals of the young generation in Europe are seeking, nevertheless, the home of the soul ; they seek the mystery of submission of all emotions in our soul to the will of God. The young generation begins to feel that a solution of the vital problems in our age is only possible if every individual person begins to recognize the will of God in his own soul or self.

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If it is true that this new longing for God is reviving again in young Europe, then it is also very probable that at least a large proportion of this new generation will find their way, through the living doctrine of Islam, to the eternal truth that underlies all the words of all the prophets of Allah. And it is also very probable that the external form of this new development, or longing for God, will again be the mosque which symbolically represents a prayer "shaped in stone," from the beginning of washing to the inward sinking into one's self before the Mihrab.

If we visualise the latest evolution of European architecture and technical industrial style, we can easily imagine typical Islamic mosques which would also show a certain German, French, English or other national style of the West in the same way as we can already distinguish an Arabic, Turkish, Indian, Javanese or Chinese type of mosque.

We cannot point out in this article why there is still such a wide gap between Islam and the young European generation, but we will only allude to the misunderstanding which causes this gap but which will be entirely cleared up in time.

*First*, Europe does not appreciate Islam, because it still regards it from the point of view of national Chauvinism and imperialistic colonial politics. Since these two factors are based upon lies, they will vanish with time.

The *second* cause of this misunderstanding between Europe and Islam is attributable to some Islamic individuals. For example, many people of the younger generation in the Orient believe that progress can only be attained by disregard of the inward culture of the soul and religion. This grave error encourages in Europe the old false opinion which Europe once held about Islam. On the other hand, we find in Islamic countries some extremely



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conservative individuals who think to serve Islam by opposing all European inventions, regardless of the fact that innovations, such are in themselves in some cases more Islamic than certain external forms which those same conservatives borrowed in former times from the Byzantines and others. This extreme conservatism seems to justify the error of Europe which falsely accuses Islam of a lifeless and rigid formalism.

The young post-war generation in Europe, acting as a bridge or the uniting link between the two worlds of thought, is in its essence sympathetic to Islam and to its lofty task amongst peoples.

Islam itself is a bridge not only because of its teachings that lead from the earthly standard of life to the eternal, not only because of its being a religion which links the limited thought of the human soul to the unlimited longing and eternal love for Allah, but also in its expression as a civilization and a culture between Europe, which emphasises this life in our earthly home and Asia which emphasises the other life of our earthly life.

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### A TOUR THROUGH MUSLIM LANDS.

BY SIR ABDUL KARIM GHAZNAVI.

*(Continued from vol. XX, p. 396).*

The route to Medina lay *via* Jedda, from where the distance is 400 kilos. Formerly it used to take 14 to 18 days by caravan: now it is covered in two days by car. Medina or Yethreb is the City of the Prophet. The day he fled to Medina from Mecca is the first day of the Muslim calendar—the year of the Hijri. Over the Prophet's tomb is erected a magnificent mosque with green enamelled dome, and the Harem Shereef, and the mosque at Medina have been embellished through centuries by successive Sultans.

## A TOUR THROUGH MUSLIM LANDS

I crossed over to Suakin, which at one time was a famous port. It is more or less an island city full of traditions of Kitchener of Khartoum and of the great warrior Osman Digna, one of the Marshals of the Mahdi. Within the last 20 years a wonderful little town has sprung up round the tomb of a Saint, which is now the real port of Sudan, and is thus called Port-Sudan. The town is well-planned, with wide streets. Vigorous attempt has been made to adorn it with vegetation. The few scraps of vegetation that are seen there are the pride of the officials. The government is only dual in the sense that both the Union Jack and the Egyptian flag fly side by side: but the administration is carried on entirely by the British. The court language is Arabic, and every British officer has to transact business in that language. The area of Sudan is a million square miles, which is about the same as that of British India.

The railway journey from Port-Sudan to Khartoum, *via* Atbara, takes about 30 hours. Khartoum is essentially the city of Gordon Pasha, since rebuilt by Lord Kitchener.

A drive of some 10 miles along Kitchener Avenue leading to Omdurman brings one to the bridge at the confluence of the Blue and White Nile, which is indeed a romantic spot; and beyond Omdurman along the White Nile, on two sides of it, lies the richest water-course in the whole world.

The Mahdi's tomb at Omdurman was a fine structure but it was damaged almost out of all recognition during the War. Opposite is the Mahdi's Khalifa Abdullah Haye's house, who kept the combined Egyptian and British armies at bay for 17 years. The Khalifa's house was turned into a museum. We noticed a model of the battle-field where it was shown that the second army of the Khalifa, which was ordered to turn the flank of Kitchener's

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army, arrived just a little too late, "but for which," said Mr. Sarsfield-Hall, the Governor, "we should never have been here."

From Khartoum to Halfa by train is a journey of 24 hours. From Halfa we proceeded in one of the Government steamers to Shellal on the Egyptian border. This journey occupies two days and is extremely pleasant. The Aswan Dam is about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles in length, and is indeed a remarkable engineering feat.

The next engineering triumph is the Nag Hamadi Barrage where we were met by Naqib Bey Ibrahim, Director of Irrigation Projects. From Nag Hamadi we went by train to Asyut. Here also was a barrage which was another of Egypt's wonderful irrigation achievements. On the way to Asyut can be seen the tunnel-canal at Alhawiya, which was in process of construction for purposes of irrigation.

From Asyut we motored to Deyroot along the Ibrahimiya Canal which goes right up to Cairo—a distance of about 400 miles. At Deyroot, there is a huge regulator. From here runs another canal called Yusufia, which is supposed to have existed from the days of the Prophet Joseph, who ruled over Egypt, and is supposed to have originated the idea of irrigation.

*(To be continued).*



## WHAT IS ISLAM ?

### WHAT IS ISLAM ?

The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teachings. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.

**ISLAM, THE RELIGION OF PEACE.**—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission; as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

**OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.**—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

**THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.**—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, *i.e.*, the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's Prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

**THE QUR-ÁN.**—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

**ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.**—These are seven in number: belief in (1) Allah; (2) Angels; (3) Books from God; (4) Messengers from God; (5) the Hereafter; (6) the Premeasurement of good and evil; (7) Resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

**PILLARS OF ISLAM.**—These are five in number: (1) declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad; (2) Prayer; (3) Fasting; (4) Almsgiving; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Mecca.

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**ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.**—The Muslims worship One God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of All the Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

**FAITH AND ACTION.**—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden, and none can expiate for another's sin.

**ETHICS OF ISLAM.**—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

**CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.**—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

**THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.**—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations, the one to the other.

**EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.**—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

**PERSONAL JUDGMENT.**—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

**KNOWLEDGE.**—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

**SANCTITY OF LABOUR.**—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

**CHARITY.**—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.



## SUPPLEMENT TO THE ISLAMIC REVIEW, DECEMBER 1932.

DEAR BROTHER-IN-ISLAM,—Assalamo-Alaikum,

Charity, if properly collected and used, would meet our various needs. Though some of our brethren have now realised the importance of this institution, yet most of us, though liberal in various other ways, are still negligent of this duty. The Holy Qur-án and the Prophet (May the peace of Allah be upon his soul) lay special stress on the institution of *Zakat*. The Book also says that the life of a nation depends upon alms-giving. The Book lays down some eight objects to which we should apply our *Zakat*. The sacred words are as follows:—

“Alms are only for the poor and the needy, and the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are made to incline (to truth), and the (ransoming of) captives, and those in debt, and in the way of Allah and the wayfarer: an ordinance from Allah; and Allah is Knowing, Wise.” (Holy Qur-án : 9 : 60).

The holy words show that 3/8th of the *Zakat*, i.e., the 3rd, 4th and 7th items should go towards the propagation of Islam; because the success and prosperity of our nation, as the Qur-án\* says, depends on doing so.

Need I say that our Missionary activities at Woking have proved to be most successful of all the other movements that we have undertaken, within the last quarter of the century, to better our conditions. And I may say that all our political activities have been baffled down by other.

The best way to preach Islam in Europe is the dissemination of Muslim literature. Our efforts in this respect

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\* And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and these it is that shall be successful. (Holy Qur-án : 3 : 103.)



have been successful. We can do wonders within short time if we have enough of money to distribute Islamic literature broadcast. The question is a simple one if our brethren would consider the following points :—

Firstly, the Qur-án has enjoined upon us the spread of Islam. Secondly, the Qur-án has laid *Zakat* upon us as a duty and demands from us to spend a large portion of it in this respect.

Thirdly, Woking Mission is now decidedly a success, and more help to it from you would achieve wonderful success, for our work.

Fourthly, time for *Zakat* is near at hand and I request you to pay a portion of it to meet our Mission expenses.

Yours sincerely,

KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN,

*Founder of the Woking Muslim Mission*

(ENGLAND).

ALL REMITTANCES TO BE MADE PAYABLE  
TO THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE WOKING  
MUSLIM MISSION AND LITERARY TRUST, AZEEZ  
MANZIL, BRANDRETH ROAD, LAHORE, PUNJAB,  
INDIA.